

VERTIGO

WILLINGHAM AKINS PALMIOTTI

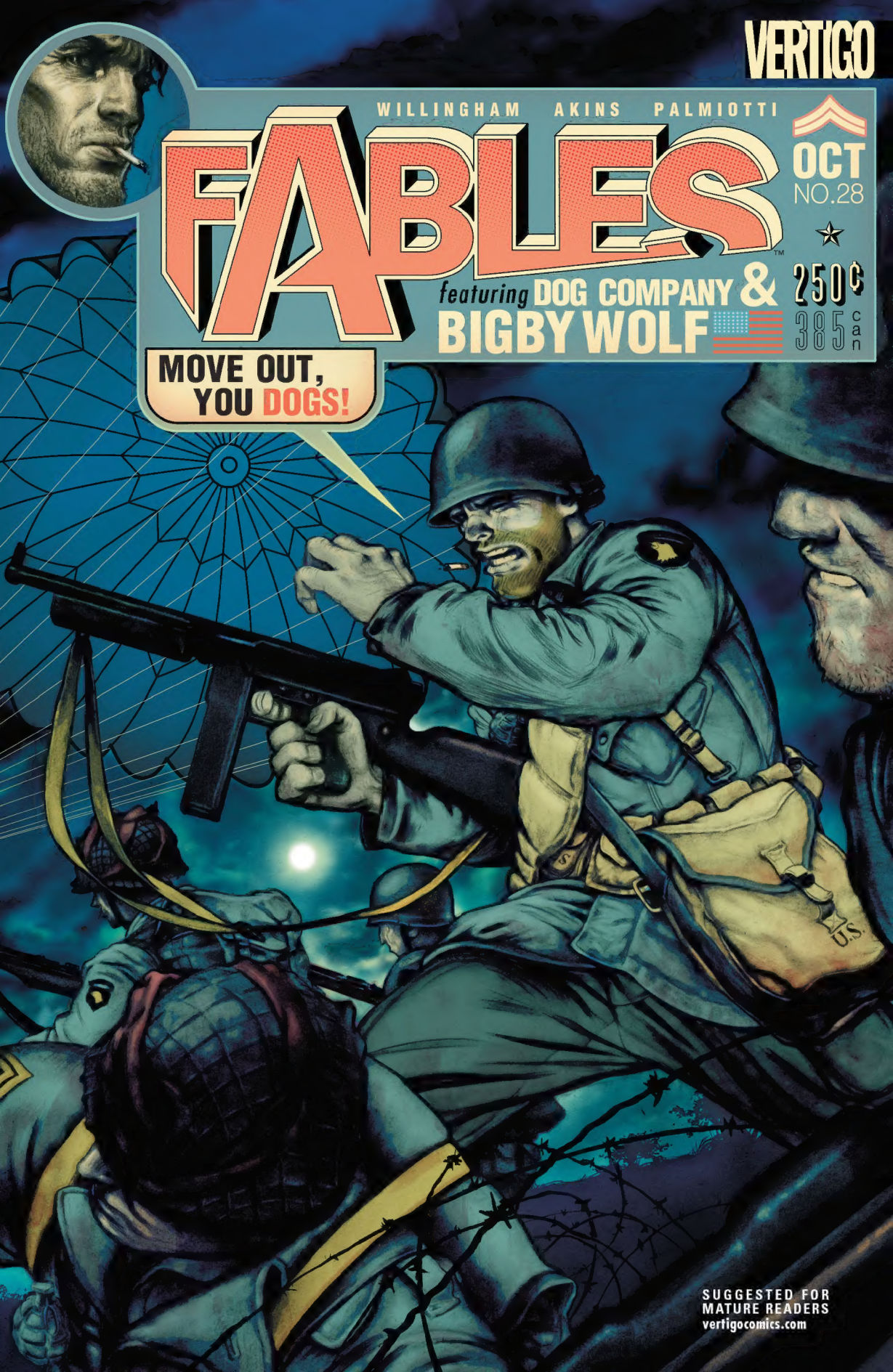
FABLES

OCT
NO.28



featuring **DOG COMPANY &** **250¢**
BIGBY WOLF **385** can

**MOVE OUT,
YOU DOGS!**



SUGGESTED FOR
MATURE READERS
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BIGBY,
YOU OLD HOUND
DOG!



HOW THE
HELL'VE YOU
BEEN?

COME IN,
BOY! COME IN!
DON'T STAND THERE
IN THE HALL LETTING
ALL MY HEAT
OUT.



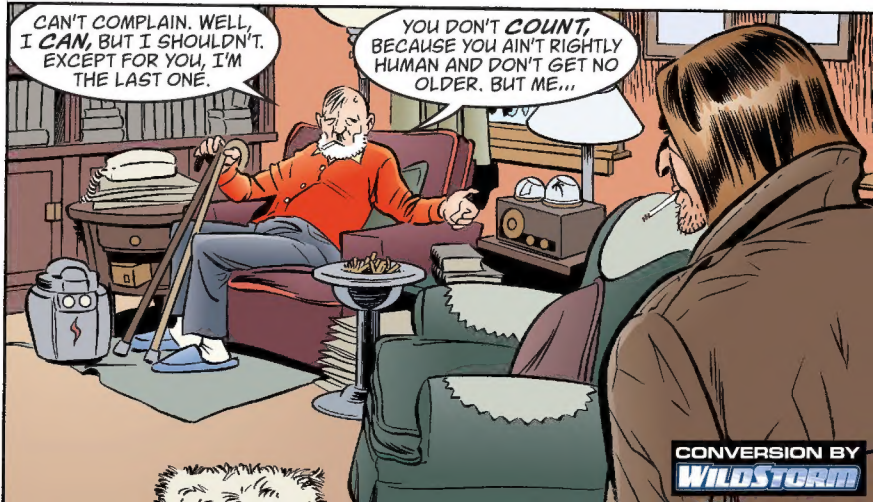
I'LL
GET BEER.
YOU CLOSE THE DOOR
BEHIND YOU, AND THROW
THE DEADBOLT. KEEP
THE RIFFRAFF
OUT.

THIS HAS
TURNED INTO ONE
PISS-POOR NEIGHBOR-
HOOD OVER THE
YEARS.

GOT
IT.

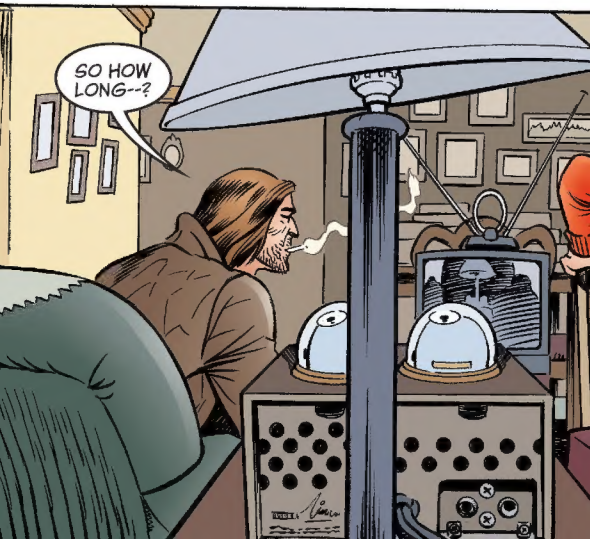
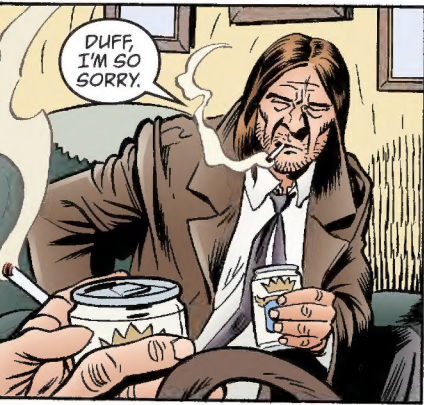
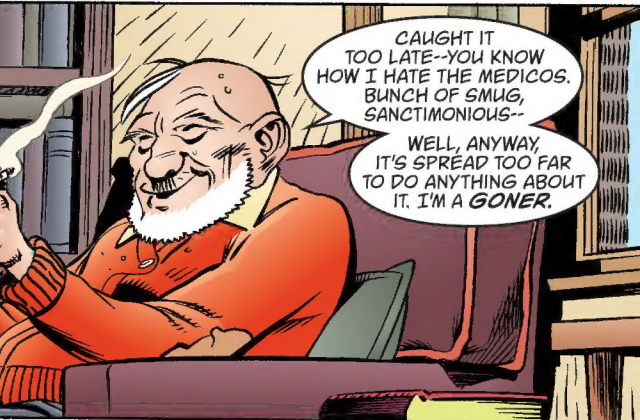
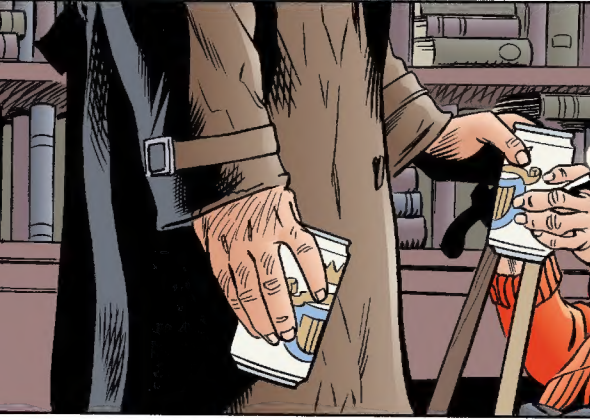
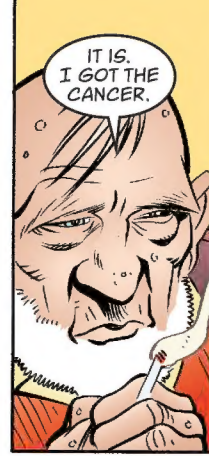
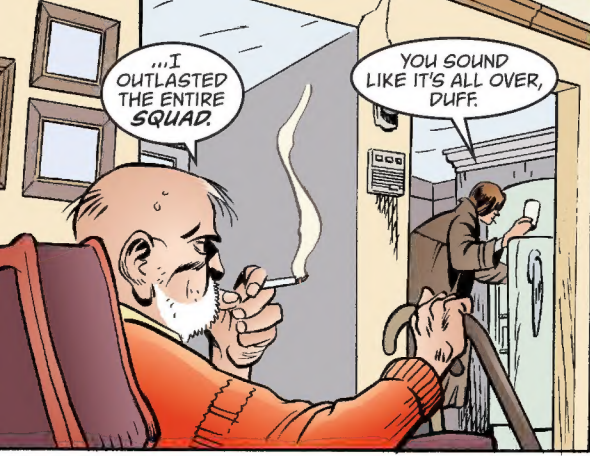


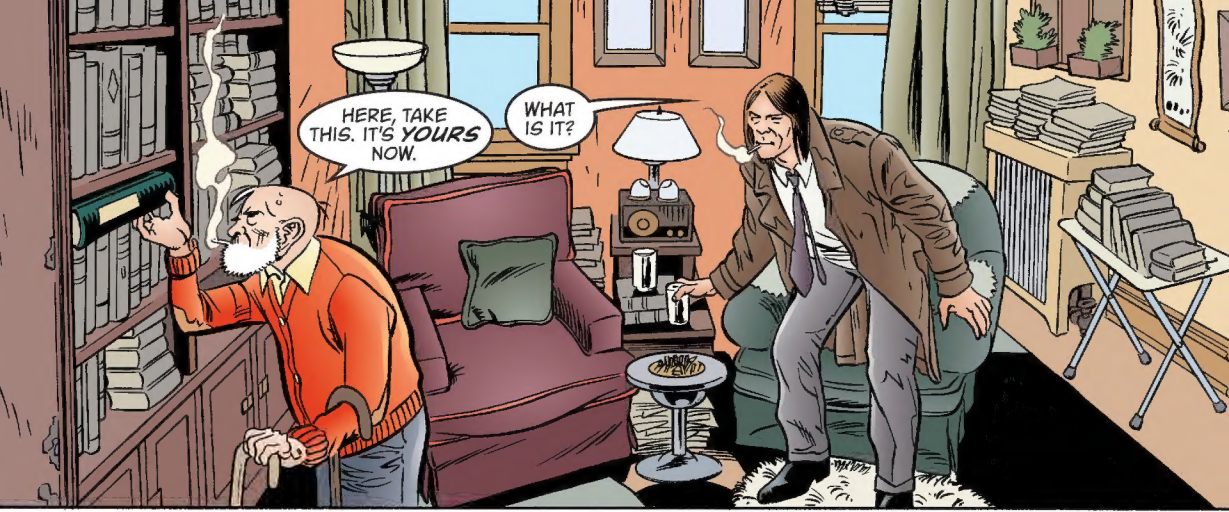
HOW'VE
YOU BEEN,
DUFFY?



CAN'T COMPLAIN. WELL,
I CAN, BUT I SHOULDN'T.
EXCEPT FOR YOU, I'M
THE LAST ONE.

YOU DON'T *COUNT*,
BECAUSE YOU AIN'T RIGHTLY
HUMAN AND DON'T GET NO
OLDER. BUT ME...





HERE, TAKE THIS. IT'S YOURS NOW.

WHAT IS IT?

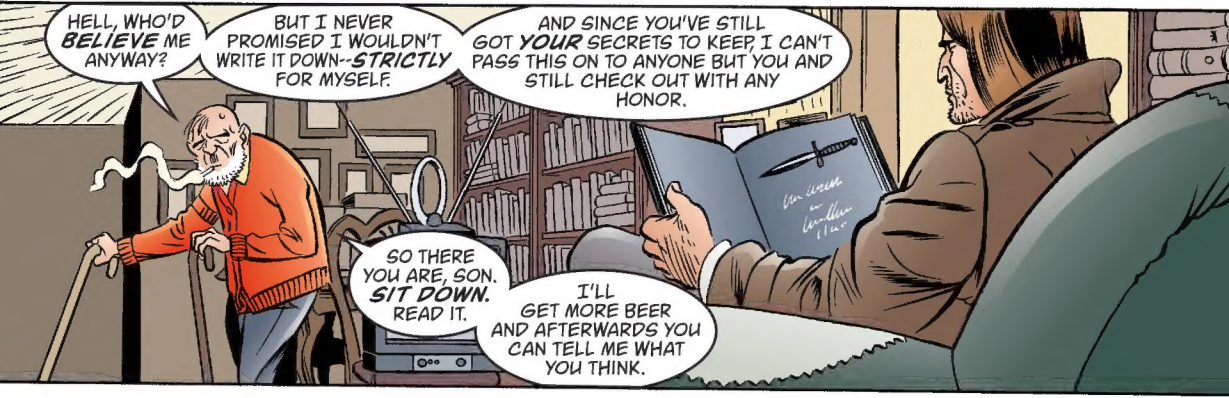


US. OUR STORY. THE WHOLE THING.



DUFFY YOU PROMISED YOU'D NEVER WRITE ABOUT--

I SWORE I'D NEVER PUBLISH ANYTHING, OR TELL ANYONE--AND ALL THESE YEARS I KEPT MY WORD.



HELL, WHO'D BELIEVE ME ANYWAY?

BUT I NEVER PROMISED I WOULDN'T WRITE IT DOWN--STRICTLY FOR MYSELF.

AND SINCE YOU'VE STILL GOT YOUR SECRETS TO KEEP, I CAN'T PASS THIS ON TO ANYONE BUT YOU AND STILL CHECK OUT WITH ANY HONOR.

SO THERE YOU ARE, SON. SIT DOWN. READ IT.

I'LL GET MORE BEER AND AFTERWARDS YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK.



I'M NO SHELBY FOOTE, BUT I CAN TURN A NOT-TOO-SHABBY PHRASE, IF I DON'T MIND SAYING IT FOR MYSELF.

July 26th, 1944. After more than a month of getting chewed up in the hedgerows of Normandy, they promised us a full two weeks off of the front lines.

But just a few days into our R & R, they cherry-picked eight of us unlucky bastards from Dog Company - 3rd of the 605th - for a special mission.

Operation Chambermaid.

Don't bother trying to look it up. There's no surviving record. It never officially happened.

Four days later we dropped, under jet black canopies, practically in der Fuhrer's back yard.

DOG COMPANY

War Stories,
Part One

**BILL
WILLINGHAM**
writer/creator

TONY AKINS penciller
JIMMY PALMIOTTI inker
DANIEL VOZZO color/seps

**TODD
KLEIN**
letters

**JAMES
JEAN** cover art
**MARIAH
HUEHNER** asst. editor

**SHELLY
BOND**
editor





Lieutenant Ronald Levine commanded us. I didn't know him too well, because he was the 3rd Platoon Leader. But he had a reputation as a good guy.

Not a complete fuckup, like my platoon's Lt. Hilling, who should've been issued his own monogrammed body bag.



FORM ON ME.

Staff Sergeant Michael Supinski was our company Top Sergeant. He was a perpetually pissed-off son of a bitch. I didn't like him.

Hell, I hated him.

But I'm sure glad someone decided to send him along.



YOU HEARD YOUR LIEUTENANT. HE WANTS YOU OVER THERE, SO WHY AREN'T YOU OVER THERE, ZILMER?

I'M A BIT TANGLED UP HERE, SARGE.

Private Zilmer was in the 2nd Platoon. He looked like a librarian...



TURN TO UNLOCK
PRE TO RE

...but I never saw any-one who liked to fight as much as he did, after a single beer.



No shit, he even took a swing at Tice once.



I GOT MY EYE ON YOU, PRIVATE.

WHICH IS ALWAYS A COMFORT TO ME, SARGE.



Private First Class, Joey Tice, 4th Platoon. The human wall. He was our B.A.R. man.

Corporal John Baker, 3rd Platoon. Our medic. We called him Cutter for reasons you don't really need to know.



My buddy, Private James Schmachtenberg, was the only other guy from the 1st Platoon. We called him Alphabet, for obvious reasons.

NICE NIGHT. CLEAR.

He was our sharp-shooter and could shoot the dick off a fly at 300 meters.

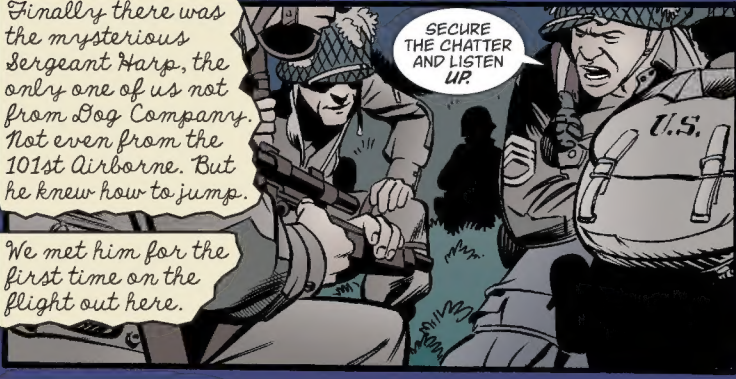


I guess that made up for me, who couldn't hit a barn at close range.

Private Shawn Duffy, esquire. 1st Platoon.

HOW DID A USELESS SPUD LIKE YOU GET PICKED FOR THIS MISSION, DUFFY?

USELESS BUT HANDSOME, SARGE. MAYBE THEY NEED SOMEONE TO SEDUCE VITAL INFORMATION OUT OF ALL THE PRETTY FRAULEINS WE MEET.



Finally there was the mysterious Sergeant Harp, the only one of us not from Dog Company. Not even from the 101st Airborne. But he knew how to jump.

We met him for the first time on the flight out here.

SECURE THE CHATTER AND LISTEN UP.



FOR ONCE THE FLYBOYS SEEM TO HAVE DROPPED US RIGHT WHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.

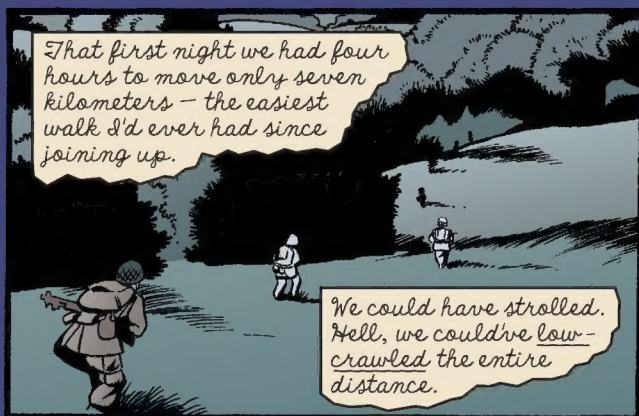
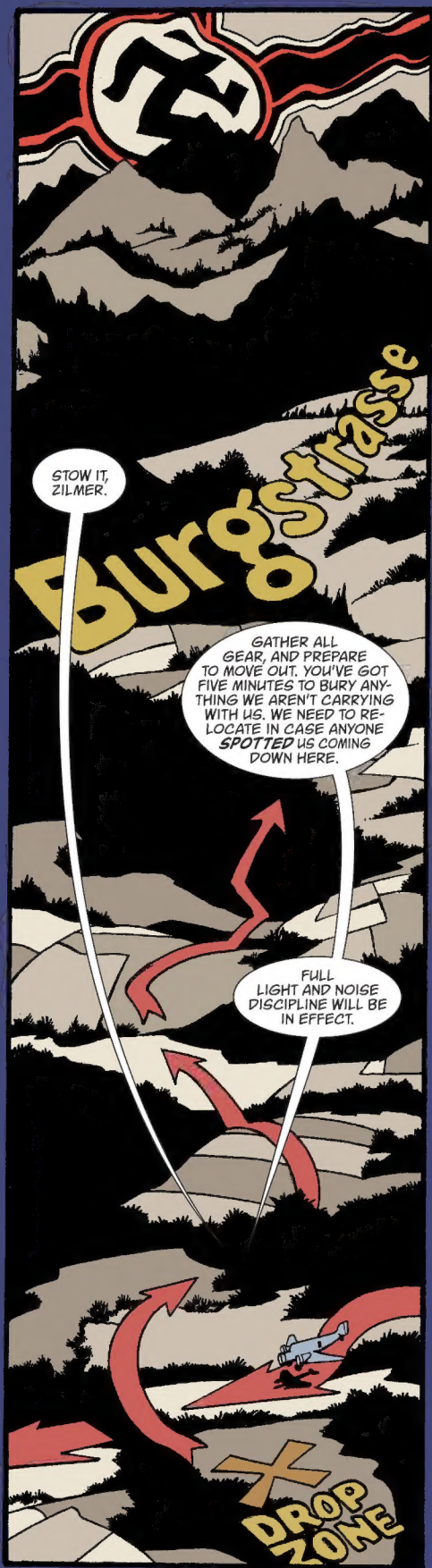


It was clear right away that Sarge didn't like him. He called Harp "the man from Area 7," but wouldn't explain what that meant.

But our mission was to get him wherever he wanted to go.



THERE'S A GODDAMN MIRACLE.



We arrived at a wooded spot in the high hills that looked exactly like every other spot we'd been humping through all night. What made this place so special, I had no idea.

The Sarge posted three of us on the perimeter and ordered the rest to hunker down and shut up.

I GUESS THIS QUALIFIES AS "SAFELY DOWN," LIEUTENANT, SO YOU CAN OPEN YOUR SEALED ORDERS NOW.

BREAK OUT YOUR PONCHO, SERGEANT SUPINSKI. WE NEED A LIGHT COVER.



ARE THEY INSANE?



IS THIS A JOKE?

AFRAID NOT.



PLENTY OF TIME TO STUDY THOSE IN DETAIL. WE'LL BE HERE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE NIGHT.

PROBABLY THROUGH TOMORROW NIGHT AS WELL-- OR LONGER.



WHY? IT SEEMS REMOTE ENOUGH, BUT--

WE'LL WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO JOIN US--THE LAST MEMBER OF OUR DETACHMENT.



HE'S OUR GUIDE FROM HERE ON OUT.



MY ORDERS DON'T MENTION NOTHING ABOUT A NINTH MAN.

NO, HE'S OFF THE BOOKS--A FRIEND I'VE WORKED WITH BEFORE.



WITH HIM ALONG, THIS FOOL STUNT ACTUALLY HAS A **SMALL** CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

WITHOUT HIM, I WOULDN'T EVEN **ATTEMPT** IT.



I DON'T LIKE IRREGULAR SHIT LIKE THIS, SERGEANT.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR, WHO CARES?



YOU COMMAND YOUR **MEN**, BUT I COMMAND **YOU**. PERHAPS YOU NEED TO REREAD YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.

NO, THEY WERE CLEAR ENOUGH--**SERGEANT HARP**.



AS LONG AS WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER--**SIR**.

So do you know what we did for the next three days? Nothing. Not a goddamn thing except sit on our fat asses out in the woods eating cold X-rations and keeping our heads down.

It was like a vacation. No one shot at us, and the loudest noise we heard was the birds singing.

The weather was warm, and the woods smelled like a fancy whore's boudoir — peach, cherry, almonds, magnolias and forsythias.



GOD BLESS GENERAL IKE, OR WHICHEVER OTHER REAR-ECHELON **PUKE** PICKED ME FOR THIS JOB.

IF I'D KNOWN THIS IS WHAT MISSIONS BEHIND ENEMY LINES WERE LIKE, I'D HAVE VOLUNTEERED **LONG** AGO.

Then, in the middle of the fourth day, the civilian showed up.

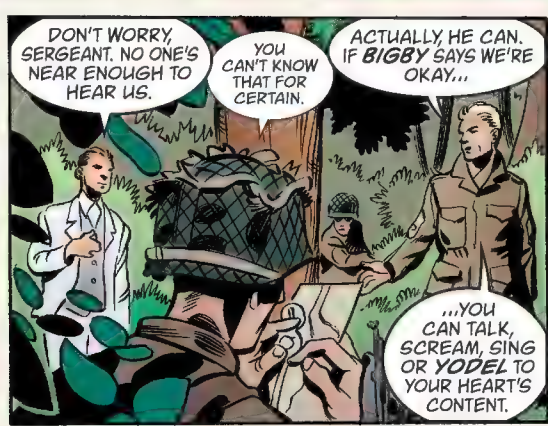


BIGBY!



SORRY I'M LATE, HARP. I HAD TO DIVERT A COUPLE OF NOSY **PATROLS** FROM THIS AREA.

KEEP IT DOWN. WHAT HAPPENED TO NOISE DISCIPLINE?



DON'T WORRY SERGEANT. NO ONE'S NEAR ENOUGH TO HEAR US.

YOU CAN'T KNOW THAT FOR CERTAIN.

ACTUALLY, HE CAN. IF **BIGBY** SAYS WE'RE OKAY...

...YOU CAN TALK, SCREAM, SING OR **YODEL** TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.

That night we moved out again with the civilian leading us.

<SO WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AFTER THE VALLOIRE JOB??>

<DID YOU GO BACK AND KEEP YOUR PROMISE TO THAT FARM GIRL WHO HID US??>

<NO TIME, TOO BAD, THOUGH. SHE WAS A CUTIE, WASN'T SHE??>

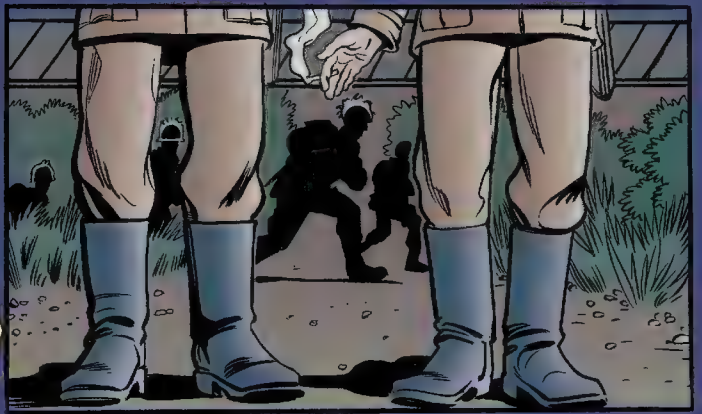
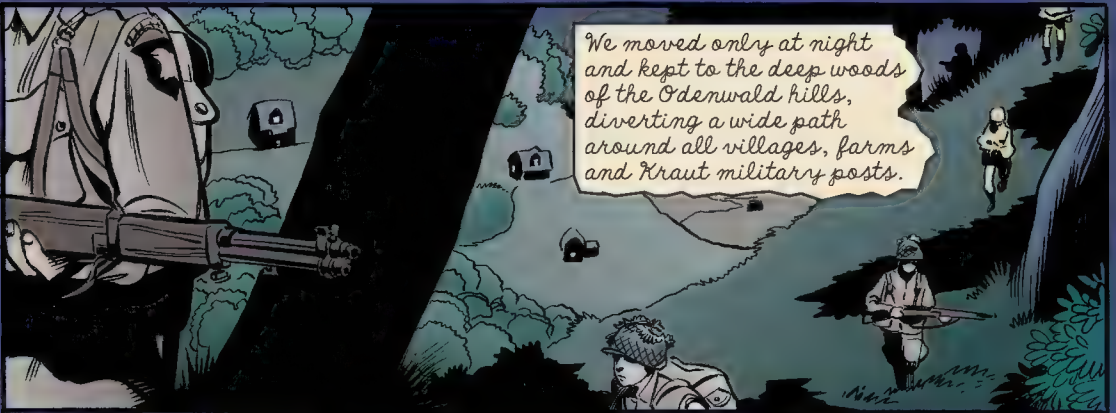
<NOT EXACTLY MY TYPE.>

Most of the time he jabbered with Harp in perfect, unaccented German.

<DULLES NEEDED ME IN LEIPZIG, TO RETIRE FIELD MARSHAL VON REICHENAU.>

<PLANE CRASH, WASN'T IT??>

Sometimes he made us all shut up — and then we had to be real quiet.



Our orders were to avoid contact with the enemy.

God bless.



And the best part? Each morning, when we stopped for the day, the civilian would sneak off on his own to return in a while with all sorts of goodies.



HOW DO YOU COMMANDEER THIS STUFF, MR. WOLF, WITHOUT GIVING US AWAY?

Roasted chickens, hams, meat pies, hot sausages, bread and boiled eggs. And once even beer.



THE LOCALS THINK I'M CONFISCATING IT FOR THE DISTRICT GESTAPO BOSS.

Real food and no fighting.



Why aren't all wars run this way?

WHO'D BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO CHECK UP ON ME--TO MAKE SURE THAT'S WHERE THEIR FOOD IS REALLY GOING?

One night our guide led us through an enemy patrol encampment. No danger, though. They were all dead.

HERE'S WHERE YOU HAVE A **DECISION** TO MAKE, LIEUTENANT.

BIGBY AND I ARE GOING TO BORROW SOME JERRY UNIFORMS.

It was the most horrible thing I'd ever seen.

They looked like they'd been attacked in their sleep by wild animals.

YOU CAN HAVE YOUR MEN DO THE SAME. IT MIGHT DELAY THE COMING FIGHT FOR A WHILE.

BUT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, BEFORE THIS IS OVER, THERE WILL BE A FIGHT.

AND IF WE'RE CAPTURED IN FALSE UNIFORMS--

--NO PRISON CAMP--

--WE'LL SIMPLY BE SHOT AS SPIES.

EXACTLY.

I GUESS WE'LL STICK TO OUR OWN GEAR.



We reached our destination in the hills overlooking the village of Eberstadt.

THAT'S OUR TARGET, MEN.

THAT CASTLE?

BIGBY AND I ARE GOING TO SNOOP AROUND IN IT FOR AN HOUR OR TWO, AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO BLOW IT THE HELL OFF THE FACE OF THE PLANET.



YOUR PART'S SIMPLE: TO GET US THERE AND WATCH OUR BACKS WHILE WE'RE INSIDE.



UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S SURROUNDED BY A NUMBER OF *HEAVY* GUN EMPLACEMENTS, AND AT LEAST ONE MOTOR COMPANY OF ELITE SS TROOPS--PROBABLY TWO.

FUCK US.



DON'T WORRY, PRIVATE. WE'VE FOUND A WAY TO *BYPASS* MOST OF THEM.

WHICH IS WHY WE'RE HERE, ON *THIS* HILL, RATHER THAN OVER THERE, ON *THAT* ONE.





THE TROOPS OVER THERE DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT. EVEN THE GASTHAUS OWNERS NEVER KNEW IT EXISTED. YOU'D HAVE TO BE A FEW CENTURIES OLD TO REMEMBER IT.

WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION: HOW'D YOU KNOW?



SHHHHH.

TOP SECRET.



We entered the cramped, dark tunnel that afternoon. It was beginning to feel like a deadly mission again.

CAREFUL MEN. IT'S A TIGHT SQUEEZE.

JUST COZY ENOUGH TO SERVE AS OUR COMMUNAL GRAVE?

The tunnel was about two miles long and ended in the same kind of door as the one we entered through.



WHAT NOW, SIR?

NOW WE SIT TIGHT HERE AND WAIT UNTIL WELL AFTER MIDNIGHT.

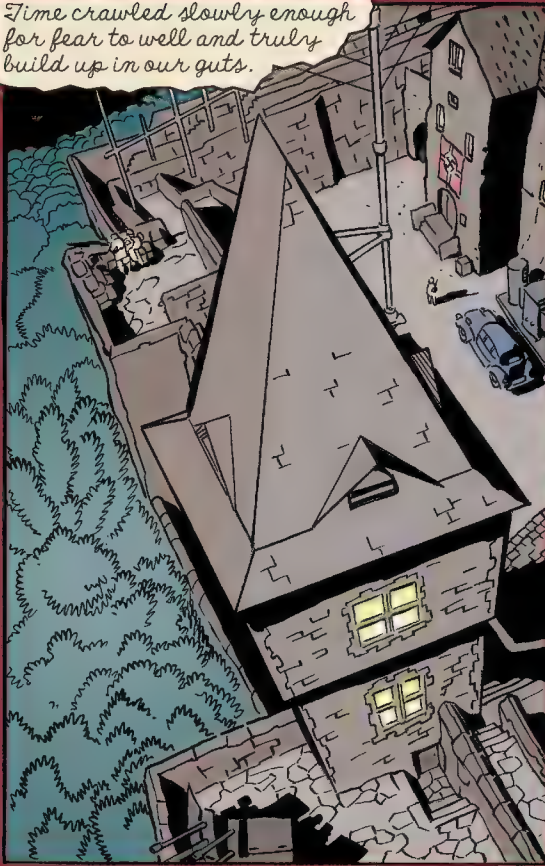


CHRIST, BIGBY, YOU JUST SHAVED AND YOU'VE ALREADY GOT A SHADOW.

THREE TIMES A DAY ISN'T NEARLY OFTEN ENOUGH.

WELL, MAKE SURE YOU SHAVE AGAIN JUST BEFORE WE GO. TRY TO LOOK LIKE A REAL KRAUT OFFICER.

Time crawled slowly enough for fear to well and truly build up in our guts.



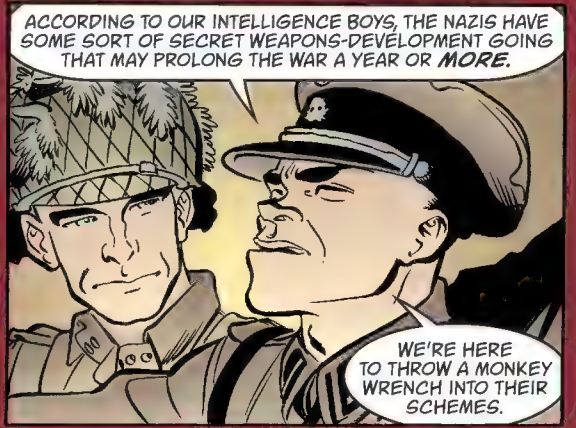
WHY'S THIS PLACE SO IMPORTANT, SERGEANT HARP?



THE OFFICIAL ANSWER IS: YOU DON'T HAVE ANY NEED TO KNOW, PRIVATE.

THE REAL ANSWER IS: WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY SURE.

ACCORDING TO OUR INTELLIGENCE BOYS, THE NAZIS HAVE SOME SORT OF SECRET WEAPONS-DEVELOPMENT GOING THAT MAY PROLONG THE WAR A YEAR OR MORE.



WE'RE HERE TO THROW A MONKEY WRENCH INTO THEIR SCHEMES.

And then, all too suddenly, it was time to go into battle.



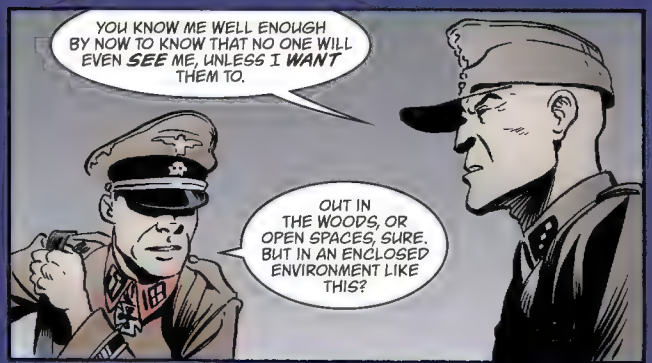
HOLD THIS DOORWAY AT ALL COSTS, LIEUTENANT. IT'S OUR ONLY WAY OUT OF HERE.

READY TO DO THIS, CAPTAIN?



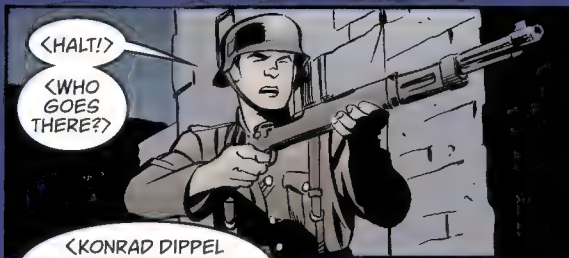
MIGHT AS WELL. I'M TIRED OF SITTING AROUND, COLONEL.







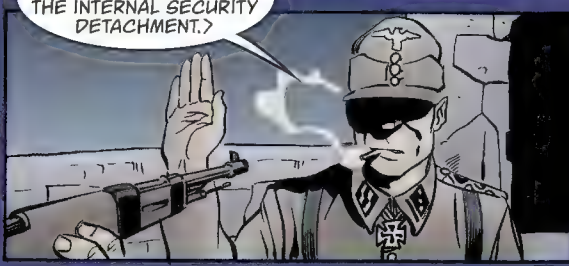
<HEY, YOU.>
<SOLDIER.>



<HALT!>
<WHO GOES THERE?>



<PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO EXPLAIN HOW I WAS ABLE TO ENTER THIS STRONGHOLD THROUGH AN UNGUARDED DOOR?>
<I... UHM... I DON'T UNDERSTAND, CAPTAIN.>

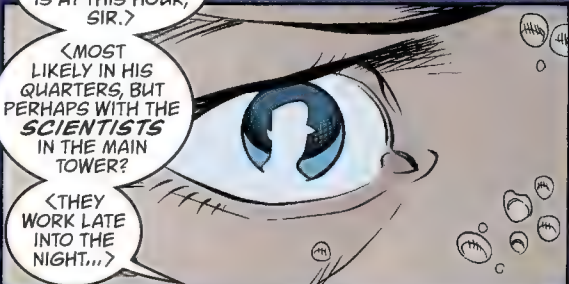


<KONRAD DIPPEL VON KLIEST, CAPTAIN OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY DETACHMENT.>



<DIRECT ME TO YOUR **COMMANDER**, SO I CAN HAVE HIM PUT UP AGAINST A WALL AND **SHOT**.>

<I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS AT THIS HOUR, SIR.>



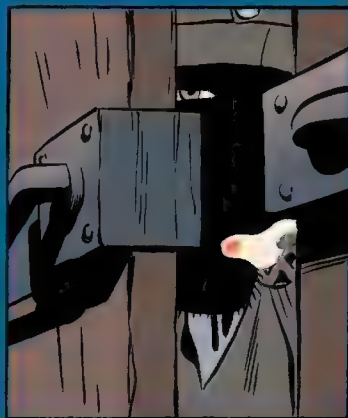
<MOST LIKELY IN HIS QUARTERS, BUT PERHAPS WITH THE **SCIENTISTS** IN THE MAIN TOWER?>

<THEY WORK LATE INTO THE NIGHT...>



<THEN I WILL SPEAK TO THEM.>

<BUT I CAN'T LET YOU GO YET, SIR, UNTIL I'VE REPORTED YOU TO MY SERGEANT.>





DEPLOY OUR B.A.R. ON THE STAIRWAY LEADING UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL, SERGEANT.

YES, SIR.

AND FIND SOME PLACE OF ADVANTAGE FOR ALPHABET.

IF THOSE TWO COME BACK ON THE RUN, WE WANT TO BE IN POSITION TO GIVE THEM LOTS OF COVERING FIRE.



SO, WHAT'S THE NAME OF THIS PLACE, SIR?

FRANKENSTEIN CASTLE.



NO SHIT, SIR?

LIKE IN THE MONSTER MOVIE?

THAT'S WHAT THEY TELL ME, AND IT WAS A BOOK FIRST, PRIVATE.





<WHEN WILL THE CREATURE BE READY, DOCTOR?>

<SOON, GENERAL. SOON.>

NEXT:
FRANKENSTEIN
VERSUS THE
WOLF MAN!

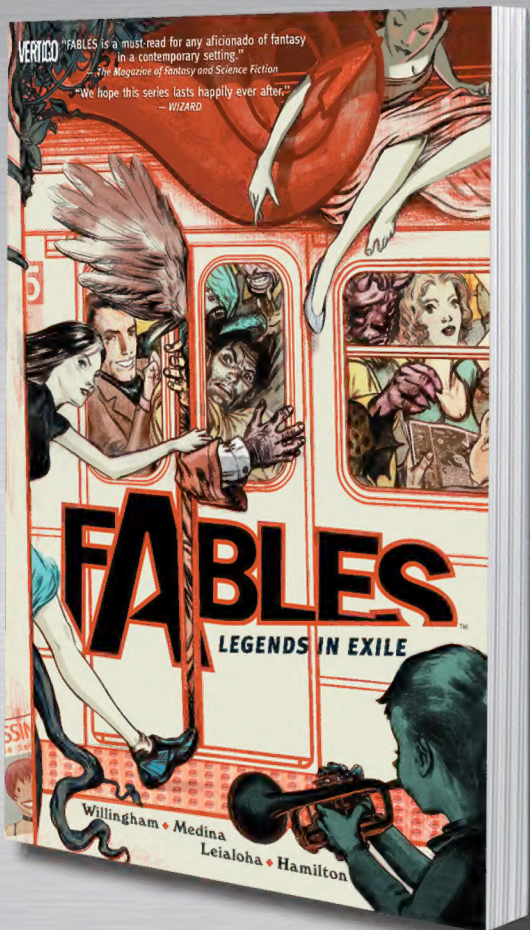
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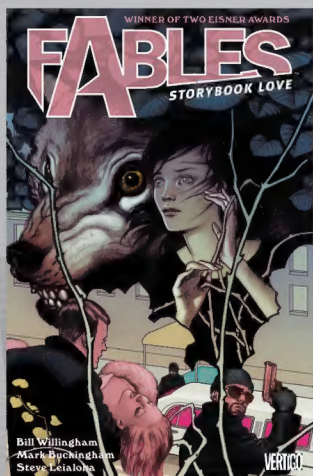
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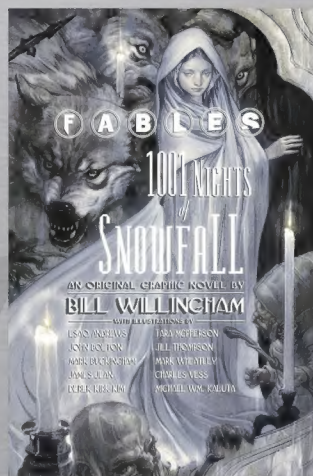
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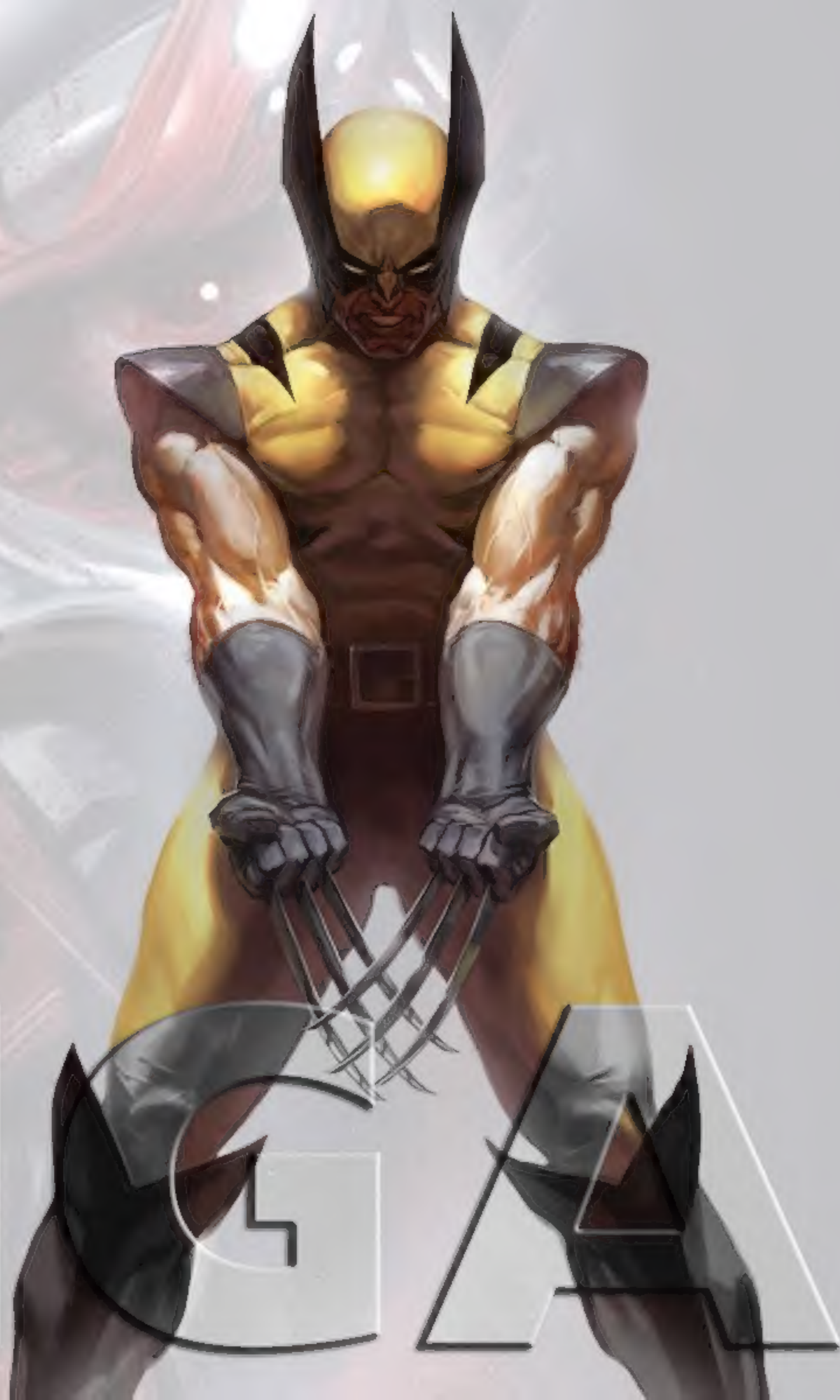


FABLES:
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



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